

FAMILY UPDATE 2009



STATE SENATOR

Patty Birkholz

Dear Friend:

In today's uncertain world, it's good to know that some things are enduring – the love and support of family, and the values of home and community. After all, it is these values, learned early in life and passed from generation to generation, that carry us through difficult times.

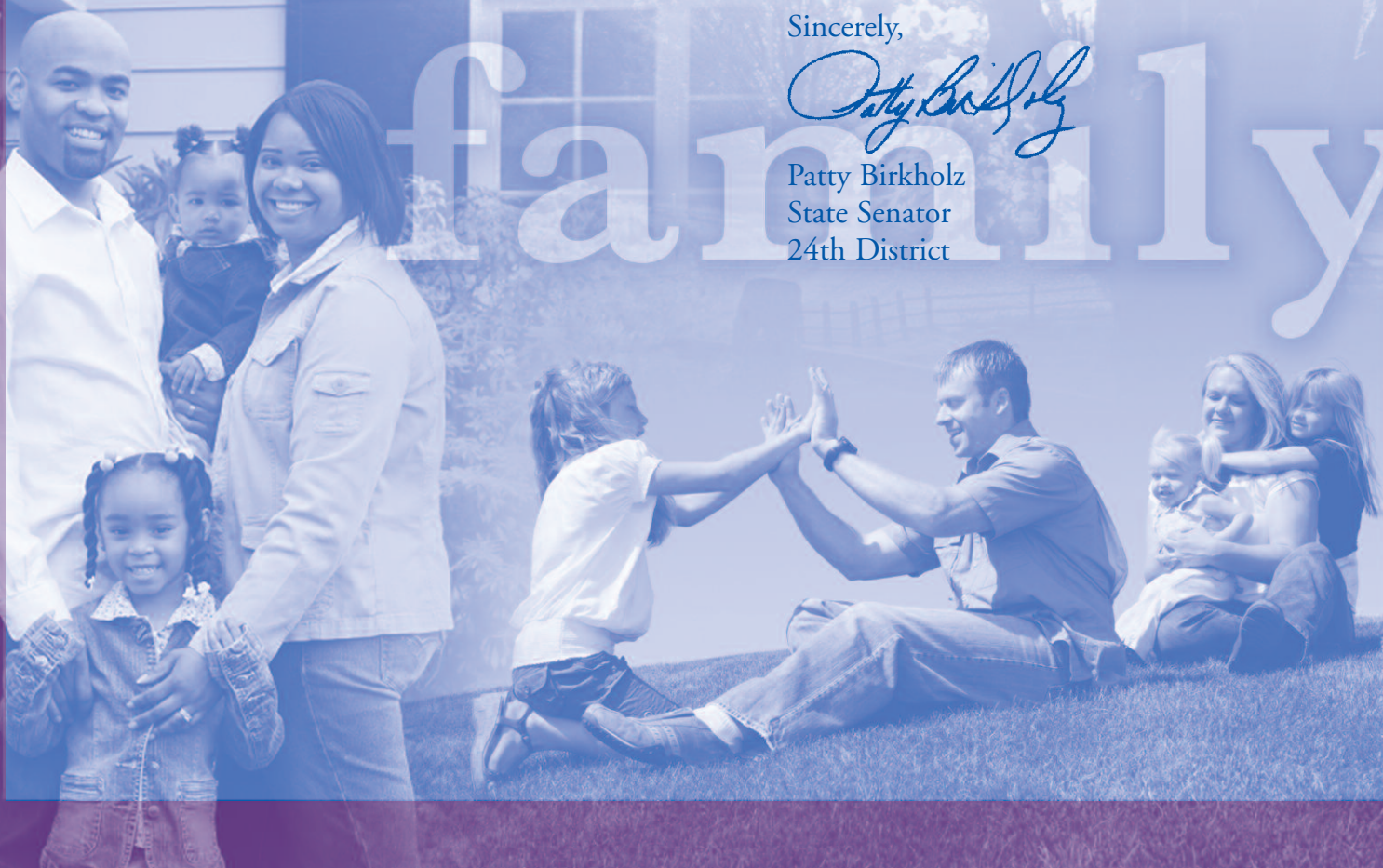
I am pleased to update you on several pro-family issues that may be of interest. Please do not hesitate to contact me toll-free at 888-28-PATTY or by e-mail at senpbirkholz@senate.michigan.gov if you would like further information on any of these topics.

It is my honor and privilege to serve the families of the 24th District and I will continue to work hard on your behalf. I hope you will call on me if you have any questions or concerns or need assistance with any state matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patty Birkholz".

Patty Birkholz
State Senator
24th District



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Senate bills define medical marijuana rules

State voters overwhelmingly approved the use of medical marijuana last fall. Senate Republicans recently introduced legislation to protect the public and make sure the drug is not misused.

Current rules are inadequate because they require very little oversight or record keeping.

Under Senate Bills 616-618, medical marijuana could be obtained only through a pharmacist and only with a prescription from a doctor, the same as other schedule 2 narcotics.

Along with penalties for violators, the bills:

- Require pharmacists to buy medical marijuana from licensed growers, and
- Limit licensed growers to 10 statewide and require annual inspections.

I did not vote for the ballot initiative, but now that medical marijuana is legal we must make sure it is grown and used appropriately. The bills also protect patients by making sure they are receiving the intended dose and that the drugs are not contaminated.



Birkholz supports strengthening child protection laws

Children in state care deserve a safe home – just like your children or mine.

New Senate legislation strengthens the review process that takes place when a child dies either while in foster care, under court jurisdiction or after involvement with Child Protective Services.

Senate Bill 257 establishes a database of non-identifying information on the children's deaths that is accessible to the public.

Other legislation (SB 258-261) adds requirements to ensure accountability and communication between local and state agencies, including the courts.

There have been several heartbreaking deaths of vulnerable children in recent years. I am hopeful this reform plan will help state and local agencies identify any patterns or trends to avoid similar tragedies.

The bills passed the Senate and await action in the House.

MICHILD

In these tough economic times, parents shouldn't have to worry about the health of their children.

Your family may qualify for MICHild, a health insurance program for uninsured children of Michigan's working families.

The program costs \$10 a month per family. There are no co-pays or deductibles.

The services are provided by many HMOs and other health care plans and include, but are not limited to:

- Prenatal care and delivery
- Regular checkups
- Shots
- Emergency care
- Dental care
- Pharmacy
- Hospital care

For more information, including eligibility requirements, call toll-free 1-888-988-6300 or go to www.michigan.gov/mdch and click on Health Care Coverage.



BIRKHOLZ SUPPORTS CORRECTIONS REFORM THAT PROTECTS THE PUBLIC

As a legislator, public safety is my top priority. New legislation working its way through the Senate helps the state save money in the corrections system without closing prisons and releasing felons.

Among other provisions, Senate Bills 473-478 and Senate Resolution 41:

- Set requirements that prisoners must meet to be paroled, including a detailed treatment plan for drug and alcohol abuse, or mental health, if appropriate;
- Require Corrections to purchase all goods and services by competitive bid;
- Require Corrections to partner with in-state medical schools for health care services;
- Require counties with teleconferencing technology to use it for court proceedings; and
- Urge Corrections to set up nondenominational prison congregation programs.

Public safety should never be compromised for budget reasons. These reforms are common sense measures that streamline prison services and cut spending without putting people at risk.

Birkholz backs bill to allow blood donation at 16

Donating blood is often called “giving the gift of life.”

I supported recent legislation that allows more teenagers to become blood donors and save lives.

Senate Bill 419 lowers the minimum age to donate blood to 16, with the permission of a parent or guardian.

Michigan's blood centers are facing increasing demand and a decreasing number of eligible donors. With their parents consent, more teenagers would have the opportunity to help others.

Thirty states allow 16-year olds to donate blood and several others have legislation pending.

The bill awaits action in the House.

*Every two seconds someone in the
U.S. needs blood!*

*A single car accident victim can require
as many as 100 units of blood!*

*More than 38,000 blood donations
are needed every day!*



State Senator Patty Birkholz

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BIRKHOLZ SUPPORTS MADE IN THE USA BILL

American flags should be made in America – especially if they're flying over government buildings.

New Senate legislation says just that. SB 48 requires American and state of Michigan flags flown over state-owned buildings to be made in the United States.

With so many products manufactured overseas, the least we can do is make sure the flag- the proud symbol of our country- is made here.

The bill has been reported out of committee and awaits consideration on the Senate floor.

PATRIOTIC LICENSE PLATE NOW AVAILABLE

We owe so much to the courage and sacrifice of the men and women serving in our armed forces. Now we have the opportunity to show our appreciation by buying a Support Our Troops license plate.

The cost of the plate is \$35, with \$25 of the fee donated to the non-profit Support Our Troops organization, which sends care packages to troops stationed overseas.

The plate features the stirring image of a military member standing with a child and an American flag as the background.

I was proud to support the legislation that authorized this special plate.

For more information about the Support Our Troops organization, visit www.SupportOurTroops.org. Information on the license plate is available at www.michigan.gov/sos.

